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Letter dated 15 August 2017 from the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, I visited Bangui from 12 to 15 July 2017, where I held discussions with different stakeholders with the intention of seeking their views on the priority aspects for the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission in the Central African Republic in the light of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery. While on my visit, I was confronted with the deteriorating security situation outside of Bangui, and in particular increased interfaith violence, which needs to be addressed urgently. The report on my visit is attached for your consideration.

I would like to thank the Central African authorities, in particular Faustin-Archange Touadéra, President of the Republic, for their warm welcome. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and his office for all their efforts, assistance and continued support, as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office for its timely and substantive advice and support.

In the meantime, I remain at the disposal of the Security Council to provide further information and clarifications as may be required. The configuration remains ready to accompany the people of the Central African Republic on their journey to peace, recovery and development and to inform the Council of developments that are relevant to peacebuilding, as appropriate.

I request that the present letter be circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Omar **Hilale**
Chair, Central African Republic configuration
Peacebuilding Commission

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Annex to the letter dated 15 August 2017 from the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

Visit of the Chair to the Central African Republic from 12 to 15 July 2017

From 12 to 15 July 2017, I undertook a visit to the Central African Republic in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. The objectives of my visit, as presented in the agreed terms of reference, were the following:

(a) To pursue, in close consultation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations country team, engagement with the Government of the Central African Republic and national, regional and international stakeholders on the country's peacebuilding and recovery agenda;

(b) To discuss the progress made in the implementation of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery, with a focus on the pillar I of the plan, which relates to issues of resource mobilization and coherence.

Ambroisine Kpongo, the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations, joined me for this visit to her country. I wish to thank her and, through her, President Faustin Archange Touadera and his Government for receiving me and for our fruitful discussions. In the meetings with the authorities of the Central African Republic, I was accompanied by either the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, or the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Najat Rochdi. I wish to warmly thank them for their guidance and advice, as well as their teams for the excellent support for the visit. I very much look forward to continuing the cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government, MINUSCA, the United Nations country team and the regional and international partners in accompanying the people of the Central African Republic on their journey to peace, recovery and development.

In Bangui, I met with the leadership of the country, including President Touadera, Prime Minister Simplice Sarandji, Minister for Foreign Affairs Charles Armel Doubane and the Vice-President of the National Assembly, Aurélien Simplice Zingas. I met with other national stakeholders, including the civil society network for human rights, the women's platform and the youth council. I also met with the diplomatic community based in Bangui and representatives of the international organizations present there. I had multiple discussions with the Special Representative, the Deputy Special Representative and their teams who are working on different aspects of the United Nations mandate in the Central African Republic, in particular those aspects related to pillar I of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, and rule of law.

On Friday, 14 July, I travelled to Bangassou (70 minutes by air from Bangui) to witness first-hand the work of the United Nations in a region that is experiencing important security-related violence and humanitarian challenges. I am providing further details on that visit in the present report, since Bangassou reflects the potential risk that the country may relapse into violence and calls for our collective and immediate response to prevent further escalation.

Indeed, my overall impression from the visit is that the Central African Republic is vacillating between the positive move towards peace and stability that is reflected by the transparent and inclusive election of President Touadera and the successful donors' conference in 2016, and a deterioration of the security situation in some parts of the country in 2017. Renewed insecurity, limited or absent State authority in northern and eastern regions, and weak national implementation capacity were the recurrent challenges underscored by the interlocutors with whom I met.

In my discussions with different stakeholders, I insisted that the armed groups could not hold the entire political process hostage and encouraged political leaders to react and condemn publicly the attacks against MINUSCA and the civilian population.

The country is at a critical juncture. The Government leadership needs to be supported in order to drive the reforms necessary for the implementation of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery. The international community needs to sustain the commitments made in Brussels in support of the national plan, and the peacekeeping arm of MINUSCA needs to be reinforced in order to secure the country and prevent further violence. If these steps are not taken quickly, the population, which is still waiting to experience a peace dividend, will be vulnerable and at the mercy of armed groups and the negative elements of the society that are seeking to manipulate it, taking advantage of a security and development vacuum. For the Government, the United Nations, and international and regional partners, it is time to bring more coherence and urgency to their work in order to prevent further escalation of the violence and build the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

Political and security developments/situation

Through my meetings with the President, the Prime Minister, the Vice-President of the National Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and representatives of civil society organizations, I got a sense that the country is well along on its journey to democracy, reflecting the positive developments of 2016, which include the presidential and parliamentary elections. The discussions were lively and touched on key issues and challenges that the country is facing.

President Touadera reiterated the commitment of his Government to restoring peace on the entire territory of the Central African Republic and his policy of inclusion of all its people. He underscored the commitment of his Government to promoting dialogue with armed groups. In that regard, the President welcomed the accord signed in Rome on 19 June 2017 under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio, describing it as a positive step toward national reconciliation. He noted that he had been represented by two delegates and that, for the first time, the 14 armed groups had signed an accord. He reiterated his appeal to those groups, inviting them to commit to the implementation of the accord by joining the political process and renouncing violence. He added that one should not come to Bangui to engage in dialogue while continuing violence in other parts of the country. The President welcomed the next step of consolidating the different dialogue initiatives into a road map, which would incorporate the key elements of the Sant'Egidio accord.

I welcomed the peace accord facilitated by the Community of Sant'Egidio as an important step and an opportunity to end violence and sustain an inclusive peace process, while highlighting the need to accelerate the harmonization of a single road map for mediation, as agreed at the Brussels coordination meeting on 21 June 2017. During my discussions with members of parliament, I was informed that an

initiative from the parliament had been submitted to the President for consideration. The proliferation of initiatives has a negative impact on the political process; it is important to agree on a single road map. In this context, I welcome the agreement signed in Libreville launching the African Initiative[1] as the unique point of reference for promoting peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

I was informed that some armed groups had begun establishing themselves as political organizations. I consider that a positive step in the peace process.

President Touadera and other interlocutors expressed their grave concern over recent developments related to violence and clashes with armed groups. In my discussions, I reiterated the same concern regarding the threat to stability that this new wave of insecurity and violence represented. This violence, which erupted in May, includes clashes between armed groups (in particular, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique) and violence perpetrated by anti-balaka groups operating in the south-east, as well as attacks against civilians on account of their ethnicity or religion and against the peacekeepers deployed to protect them.

I expressed regret that violence had continued even after the peace accord brokered by the Community of Sant'Egidio had been signed. I reiterated the concerns of the Peacebuilding Commission about the violence, which continued to target the civilian population. I also warned against the dangers of targeting communities on the basis of their ethnic group or religion. In this regard, I agree with my interlocutors in the Central African Republic, particularly the authorities and civil society organizations, that the fight against impunity, as one of the principles agreed in the peacebuilding agenda and reflected in the recommendations of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, remains a priority. I reiterated the support of the Peacebuilding Commission for the reforms and restoration efforts related to the judiciary in the Central African Republic, including the work of the Special Criminal Court.

On Friday, 14 July, I visited Bangassou, east of Bangui (on the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo), which has been affected by the latest incidents of community violence. The broad narrative around these incidents includes clashes between ex-Séléka groups, generally perceived as being foreign fighters of Muslim background, and anti-balaka elements, usually perceived as being Christians. In addition, anti-balaka elements have targeted their Muslim neighbours, accusing them of collusion with the ex-Séléka fighters. In the neighbourhood of Bangassou that I visited, Tokoyo, about 2,000 Muslims have been displaced from their houses and properties. Their houses, as well as the central mosque, have been destroyed or vandalized, and they are being "sheltered" by the Catholic Church in a poorly protected location. I was told that one of the motivations behind those fights was economic; the region is rich in natural resources such as uranium, diamond and gold. The message from the local authorities and the representative of the Catholic Church with whom I met was that MINUSCA peacekeepers with Muslim backgrounds (mainly Moroccans) were biased in favour of the Muslim communities and should be removed from Bangassou. This kind of message has taken on a dangerous twist, as I was told that it was constantly reiterated by national stakeholders in their discussions with United Nations officials.

[1] During the week after my visit, the Government of the Central African Republic, together with regional actors (Angola, Chad, Congo, Gabon, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region) met in Libreville on 17 July and agreed on a joint road map for peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

In response, I called upon the Archbishop of Bangassou to keep faith in the international community and the United Nations and that, as a man of faith, he should promote coexistence and peace.

I was told that the violence in Bangassou had come as a surprise. A closer examination points to two possible additional dynamics identified by partners as being among the causes of the violence in Bangassou and in the surrounding region. One is that the recent withdrawal of United States Special Forces and the Ugandan troops that were deployed to fight the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has left a vacuum in places such as Zemio. The other is that the lack of progress in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process, particularly after the liberation of Bambari, has left many armed combatants out there; it is possible that some of them have moved from Bambari to Bangassou.

I further warned about the recent attacks that had resulted in the loss of life among United Nations peacekeepers, as well as about the sentiments and rhetoric against MINUSCA and its troops.[2] I echoed the message that the perpetrators of such acts would be prosecuted.

In our meeting with the Prime Minister, he expressed his regrets about what he considered as unfair targeting and blaming of MINUSCA for security incidents. While I welcome this statement, I encouraged him and other high-level representatives to denounce the attacks against MINUSCA soldiers and to publicly condemn attacks against any segment of the Central African population.

I insisted on this aspect, as the silence from the authorities could be interpreted as a sign of support for the actors manipulating the situation. It should also help to avoid any kind of misunderstanding between MINUSCA and some national authorities.

With the parliament, I insisted on the positive role that members of parliament could play through pacifying messages when they interacted with their constituencies. Indeed, the population pays attention to the reactions of the elite, leaders and representatives when situations of violence occur. Their silence or messages have an impact on the behaviour of the population. In this regard, I discussed with some national stakeholders the dangers of rumours and miscommunication, mainly with respect to the issues of MINUSCA troop movements or rotations, the arms embargo, the prospect of partitioning the country and impunity for perpetrators of violence and crimes. I encouraged them to speak to their constituencies and to express regret in the media about the different incidents occurring in the country.

The Central African Republic has a vibrant civil society, with relatively well-organized structures. The desire of civil society to participate to the recovery of the country is clear. During my discussions with representatives of human rights, youth and women's organizations, I felt the frustration, and sometimes anger, towards MINUSCA, the Government and regional and international partners.

Representatives of these national stakeholders expressed their frustration in relation to a number of recurrent issues, such as the arms embargo, the departure of the Congolese contingent and the dire socioeconomic situation. They also expressed regret that they had not been involved in the process that had resulted in the recently

[2] In addition to attacks that resulted in the loss of life among peacekeepers, anti-MINUSCA sentiments reflected in some recent acts include marches and protests against the withdrawal of the Congolese contingent (10-11 July), attacks against the MINUSCA force (attacks on 6 July against Portuguese peacekeepers and on 8 July against the Moroccan battalion), demonstrations by internally displaced persons requesting the departure of the Moroccan contingent, and roadblocks on the Zemio-Rafai axis (11 July).

signed agreement under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio, which they perceived as contrary to the spirit of the Bangui Forum, in particular with regard to impunity.

Socioeconomic and humanitarian situation

Growth in gross domestic product in 2017 has averaged 4.5 per cent, according to national authorities and financial institutions. The Prime Minister told me that the initial forecast had been in the double digits and that this figure had been revised downward following a slowdown which had mainly been the result of the eruption of violence.[3]

The deterioration of the security situation in 2017 has caused a worsening of the humanitarian situation, with 2.4 million Central Africans, or about 50 per cent of the population of the country, in need of humanitarian assistance. More than half a million people are internally displaced within the country, and about half a million are refugees in neighbouring countries: Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and South Sudan.

I was encouraged by the statement of the Prime Minister in which he indicated that the Government had been able to pay its civil servants with its own resources. In my meeting with him, the Prime Minister noted that recovery and peacebuilding in the Central African Republic would depend on the investments made in the economic sector.

Donors are generally positive regarding their contributions and commitments to the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery. I told my national interlocutors that the resumption of cooperation with the International Monetary Fund was a very encouraging signal. I encouraged them to undertake the associated reforms and to continue to improve the security of the country as a way to incentivize other partners and to create an environment that was conducive to further investment in the Central African Republic.

Donors have questions about the capacity of national counterparts to drive implementation and to coordinate partners and programmes. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and I urged the Government and donors to recognize that a robust commitment from both sides was critical for the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery to take off and to occupy the headlines in place of daily violent incidents. The challenges related to national capacity in the Central African Republic are more acute than in many post-conflict countries and should receive particular attention from the Peacebuilding Commission and international partners.

I welcomed the holding of the seventh meeting of the technical and financial partners of the Central African Republic, held for the first time in Bangui on 20 June 2017. This first large gathering of donors to the Central African Republic since the donors' conference of November 2016 offered the Government an opportunity to provide an update on the implementation of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery and the humanitarian situation, as well as on new ways of working.

[3] According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff team review mission of June 2017, "deterioration in the security environment disrupted trade, agriculture and mining in the last quarter of 2016, pushing growth down to 4.5 per cent". On 17 July 2017, a press release from IMF indicated that the Executive Board of IMF had completed the second review under the Extended Credit Facility arrangement for the Central African Republic, and had approved a $16.3 million disbursement and an augmentation of $15.5 million.

National plan for peacebuilding and recovery

The implementation of the peacebuilding and recovery agenda has suffered some setbacks, mainly in terms of insecurity and coordination. Funding has been mentioned as an ongoing challenge, although donors have reiterated their commitment to the pledges made in Brussels.

I was granted an update on security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, and the rule of law, which are three very important processes under pillar I of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery.

With regard to security sector reform, I was told that the United Nations (MINUSCA) and multilateral and bilateral partners were working against the clock to help the Central African Republic create its own security forces, which would fulfil the function of protecting the population and institutions, a function that was currently fulfilled by MINUSCA. It was a painful reality to hear senior Government officials telling me: "We don't have an army; MINUSCA is our army". While this statement reflects a positive appreciation of the excellent work done by MINUSCA troops, it also shows the risks of a slow security sector reform process. The indicative figures I was provided with in terms of army and police to be formed and trained do not cover the security needs of the country. The European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic plans to train between four and six battalions in a four-year period. It has already trained one battalion (600 troops) and is working with MINUSCA on its deployment. The training of the second battalion has already started.

I was informed that MINUSCA planned to help train about 3,000 people for the police and gendarmerie. The United Nations is assisting the country with the normative and soft aspects of security sector reform (vetting, training and human rights due diligence policy), while the Government pursues bilateral cooperation to fulfil the other aspects of security sector reform. The plans for equipment and infrastructure are not clear. While much can be done through bilateral cooperation, it is important to ensure that security forces have the infrastructure needed for them to take over the job of protecting and securing the country.

I was told that the reform and rapid deployment of the army and other national security forces was key to addressing the ongoing insecurity in the country. Without a proper security force, there will be no security at the multiple borders the Central African Republic shares with countries that are experiencing instability or conflict (Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda (because of the LRA)). The absence of national security forces also results in chronic insecurity linked to the competition and anarchy around mining activity and weak to non-existent control of the movement of cattle herds. In addition, the void created by the lack of security forces and the absence of State authority leaves room for all kinds of armed groups and criminals, who take the local population hostage and illegally exploit the natural resources of the country.

The national plan for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration has been developed. According to the update with which I was provided, the plan will support those individuals who qualify (about 5,000-6,000 combatants). The bulk of the combatants (about 50,000-60,000 individuals) will not qualify for the plan, however. These individuals will be supported through the community violence reduction programme, for which the Peacebuilding Fund provides support. The question of treatment of combatants coming from neighbouring countries is yet to be addressed, and I was surprised to learn that there was no funding for specific programmes for women and children.

The Sant'Egidio accord has had an impact on the initial plans. Challenges will include incorporating into the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process the families of combatants, as well as the resources needed in excess of the initial budget. Other challenges include the absence of a more formal accord with the armed groups and the integration of armed groups in the security forces. The community violence reduction programme is more complicated and requires more resources than disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation itself. Partners who support disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, such as the World Bank, have asked that these two aspects — disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, and community violence reduction — be integrated into one national programme.

Support from the Peacebuilding Fund for the first community violence reduction programme was aimed at 7,000 individuals, through cash for work and local microeconomic activity. MINUSCA added $1 million to the programme and Canada has contributed $3 million. The community violence reduction programme in Bambari should target 2,000-3,000 individuals in three communities. ($3 million is needed; the Peacebuilding Fund expected to contribute.) I was told that it was crucial for the United Nations to remain present in the region around Bambari and to activate those programmes; otherwise, armed groups might come back to the area and again cause trouble.

For the rule of law, it was explained to me that the strong focus on the Special Criminal Court could have a negative impact on support for the ordinary justice system. The lack of justice mechanisms outside of Bangui is mainly the result of insufficient security, difficulty in paying salaries and a lack of equipment. The penitentiary system also lacks basic resources and personnel, which results in there being only eight operational prisons out of the 14 that exist in the country. Even the central prison of Bangui is not fully functional. A programme for its renovation has been submitted to partners, but there are still gaps in its budget.

Regional engagement and support

Our discussions highlighted the need to accelerate the harmonization of mediation efforts with members of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, as agreed at the recent Brussels meeting. The President informed me that a meeting of the main stakeholders would take place soon to develop and discuss a joint road map to continue the peace process, which would integrate the outcome of the Sant'Egidio accord, in collaboration with the Initiative.[4] Overall, the United Nations supports the important role of the region, including regional and subregional organizations, and neighbouring countries with regard to the peace and stability of the Central African Republic. MINUSCA supports mediation efforts, including through a project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund.

My interlocutors in Bangui made an appeal for the region to play a stronger role, including by supporting the recommendations of the Bangui Forum as they pertained to issues such as impunity and amnesty, engaging in the resolution of issues such as the movement of combatants, transhumance (cross-border seasonal movement of people and herds), the trafficking of weapons and illegal commerce in natural resources.

[4] That meeting was held in Libreville on 17 July 2017 (see footnote 1).

Concluding remarks

On the side of the United Nations and key multilateral and bilateral actors, there is a sense of urgency and commitment to the peacebuilding and recovery agenda. The Government needs more support in order to meet this commitment with the capacity required. It is important for the United Nations and key partners to help build this capacity, and for the country's leadership to mobilize national counterparts and coordinate programmes and assistance in this regard. I was encouraged by the meeting I had with President Touadera. He indicated that the Government was working on its internal capacity to mobilize and implement the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery. He noted that the permanent secretariat for the national plan was being set up. He welcomed the funding being provided by some partners and invited me to continue my advocacy in order to mobilize the resources required by the programmes and projects related to the national plan.

I suggested to the President that he should send his representatives outside of Bangui more regularly, to at least give the impression of the extension of State authority. The population needs to start experiencing a peace dividend or it will be an easy target for the armed groups.

The success of the Brussels Conference goes beyond the financial aspects. It is also a strong political message of support for the President of the Central African Republic and his engagement in the political process. Any setback to or failure of that process could put into question this support.

From a security perspective, there is a sense that the country could relapse into conflict if the spiralling violence is not stopped and a peace dividend not delivered promptly. There is a widely shared view that MINUSCA peacekeeping capacity should be augmented, a view that I strongly support, given the vast territory it is covering, the resurgence of violence and the absence of national security forces. The architecture of the force should also be revised to focus on the regions that are rich in natural resources, to prevent armed groups from controlling them, which fuels instability and conflict.

I wish to advocate for such a reinforcement of the capacity of MINUSCA, in particular its troops. I note, however, that, even if the issue of resources is resolved in New York, the current trend in the Central African Republic of segregating contingents on the basis of nationality and religion will need to be firmly addressed. The United Nations cannot stay silent in the face of accusations of the complicity of blue helmets. In the absence of any action, the United Nations needs to clearly denounce such narratives and communicate that the troops deployed under the United Nations flag, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, are there to protect the population of the country.

The ethnic and religious nature of the violence, which was instrumentalized by some parties during the early stages of the conflict, is now becoming clearer. The fact that this kind of violence is now affecting Bangassou is an indication of the dangers of the conflict. Indeed, after the eruption of violence in the country in 2013, and even before, the region of Bangassou had always been seen as a safe heaven, a symbol of tolerance and inter-ethnic cohabitation, until May 2017. The international community needs to urgently address this situation, which, given the serious concerns regarding signs of ethnic cleansing, could have serious consequences for the future of the country and the engagement of the United Nations.

I was informed of the creation of a new armed group, called "les Moujahidine", as a consequence of the recent attacks against the Muslim population of Bangassou. There is a serious possibility that this group receives support from

other extremist groups, particularly Boko Haram but also others that are active in the Sahel. It is crucial to avoid attacks against Muslims being used as a pretext by these groups, which would create a risk of the whole region sliding into chaos.

All interlocutors mentioned security incidents and the resumption of community-related violence as the main challenge of 2017. Many noted that other processes were linked: disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation; security sector reform; and political dialogue.

Given the current situation in the country, I would like to recommend a visit of the Security Council to the Central African Republic, with the following suggested objectives:

- To send a strong signal about the significant concern of the Council regarding the evolution of the situation in the country
- To send a message of support for the President to pursue the ongoing political process, as well as for the commitment of the country to implementing the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery, in particular the processes for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and security sector reform, as well as the strengthening of the rule of law and national reconciliation
- To convey the firm stance of the Council regarding armed groups and to express that the Council will not accept the attempts of such groups to lead the country towards an interreligious conflict and take hostage the entire political process
- To get a better sense of the difficulties that MINUSCA is facing, and of the urgent need to address the strengthening of the armed groups, warlords and self-defence groups.

The most recent visit of the Security Council to the country was in March 2015.

The situation in the Central African Republic is an opportunity for the United Nations system to achieve a comprehensive approach that combines peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts. For instance, one United Nations senior official asked the Peacebuilding Commission to advocate for additional troops to help deliver humanitarian assistance. Without them, the population will be left with no other option than being at the mercy of armed groups, who take advantage of the absence of authority to provide a few services and gain the sympathy and support of the local population.

The plan for Bambari is also an illustration of this approach. President Touadera welcomed the mobilization of partners for the Bambari programme. He suggested that the next step after Bambari would be Kaga Bandoro, and underscored the visibility of a programme in that location as part of the visibility of the Government.

I wish to note the deficit of communication, which could have a negative impact on the trust that is needed between the Government and MINUSCA, as well as among key national, regional and international stakeholders. The hidden agendas of some national actors could jeopardize the impact of international assistance. Therefore, it is important to strengthen support for the national authorities, which will strengthen the legitimacy of the Government.

Similarly, I wish to underscore that unity of resolve among international, regional and national actors is critical to the success of the peace process, and call

for more unified messaging, commitment and coordination around the political process and mediation efforts.

I wish to encourage the subregion to continue to support the recovery of the Central African Republic, and to look at ways to address critical issues such as illicit arms trafficking and seasonal migration. I welcome the joint road map agreed in Libreville on 17 July, which is a very good step in the right direction.